

Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail

Few people are aware of the **Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail**, a 293-mile national scenic byway. From Conneaut to Toledo there are signed route links to the natural and cultural heritage of the region along Lake Erie's coast. For families planning a close-to-home get-away go to www.coastalohio.com. These are some close-to-home attractions.



Lighthouses and Marine Museums

Of the 18 lighthouses along the Lake Erie coastline, some are privately owned but most can be toured during the summertime. The 13 maritime museums show artifacts and the evolution of shipping and pleasure crafts including the *Ashtabula Marine Museum* which has the world's only scale model of a Hulett ore unloader and one of two Bascule lift bridges in the United States. The *Steamship William G. Mather Museum*, just north of the *Great Lakes Science Center*, is a restored Great Lakes freighter that operated until 1952. Locally, visit the *Fairport Harbor Lighthouse and Marine Museum* and climb the spiral staircase to the top where you will experience breathtaking vistas of Lake County, including our second Lighthouse on the west breakwater near *Headlands Beach State Park*.



Lakes, Beaches and Marshes

An uncommon sight along Lake Erie shores are natural sand beaches. But right here, in Mentor, we have the state's largest public beach (1 mile) in *Headlands State Park*. Adjacent to the beach, are unique sand dunes, vegetation and wildlife at *Headland Dunes State Nature Preserve* located in Painesville Township. Another fantastic beach is at *Lake Metroparks Fairport Harbor Lakefront Park*. Not to be overlooked is the "weekend" beach of *Geneva-on-the-Lake*.



The 691 acre Mentor Marsh, one of the largest natural marshes remaining along the Lake Erie shoreline, became Ohio's first state nature preserve in 1971. *Mentor Marsh* and the adjacent *Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve* are among the best places in the state to witness spring migrations of songbirds. Great numbers of waterfowl also stop at the marsh during seasonal migrations, such as Blue-winged Teal, American Wigeon, Gadwall, American Black Duck, Northern Shoveler and Hooded Merganser.

Pymatuning Lake is a great fishing and seasonal vacation destination created when Pennsylvania dammed its outlets in order to control the course of the Schenango and Beaver Rivers.

Forests and Farmlands

Lake Metroparks' Penitentiary Glen in Kirtland was named by early settlers for its deep gorges with 100-foot walls that were difficult to scale. Children will love the Nature Center, Wildlife Center, and a ride on the *Lake Shore Live Steamers Railroad*. Take them to *Lake Farmpark* to see the cows, pigs, bunnies, ponies and sheep.

Websites of Interest

coastalohio.com
discoverohio.com
lakevisit.com
http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/location/mentor_marsh

lakemetroparks.com
<http://www.ncweb.com/org/fhlh> (*Fairport Harbor Marine Museum and Lighthouse*)